

## *The Wind Whispers*

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830 words

The wind whispers through pine trees  
Their branches draped in coats of snow  
Heavy and bowed down and gray in the twilight  
And the breeze's voice is a melancholy murmur  
That speaks of things hidden, buried and forgotten  
Things like those that lay here under winter-dead grass  
And these marble slabs graven with names no one remembers  
In this still land of the dead and silent

The wind whispers an invitation  
A soft, sibilant, siren's call to come and join in the dance  
A breathless song of temptation  
Heard only by the gravestones and frozen, sullen snow  
At first.  
Then the song becomes more insistent, more demanding  
As it lifts faint swirls and eddies of powder from the sleeping ground  
And the drooped caps of ice that crown each monument

The wind whispers "Come play with me,"  
Cajoling, enticing, primal, undeniable  
"The dance begins, with me as the piper  
Hear my tune and follow my lead"  
The darkening sky looks down, silent and dispassionate,  
Pretending it does not hear the wind's magnetic voice  
Even as a passing field mouse stops short  
Then turns and flees in panic

The wind whispers "I bring the words  
"The words from the lips of the old woman  
"The crone who lives in the tarpaper shack  
"Close to the rusted, disused railroad tracks  
"Words muttered over a circle drawn on a floor  
"And a black basin brimming with baby's blood  
"And the heart of a serpent slain under a new moon  
"And a spell scrawled on a scroll made from a maiden's skin"

The wind whispers "Arise. Arise!  
"She who weaves the words commands it!  
"Walk again, this time in her service and thrall"

And the words flow through the wind's song  
Like ribbons of blood washing along in a mountain stream  
No living ears hear them – no bird, no mouse, for they have all fled the words --  
But other ears, ears that have long ceased hearing the world of living men,  
They hear the words

The wind whispers, lifting sugar-fine snow from the graves  
As though drawing back the blankets from a slumbering form  
And beneath the crushed, frozen grass and weeds  
Things move  
Eyes that cannot open flicker to wakefulness  
Chests that cannot hold breath expand anew  
Stiff fingers twitch – open – flex – curl into talons  
And hearts that have long been stilled stay grave-silent

The wind whispers, joyous that new voices are joining in the song it sings  
Muffled voices moaning unholy lyrics rise through the crusted snow  
Voices wracked with pain and sorrow  
Their owner's long sleep cruelly disturbed  
And they wail in torment as their hands  
Controlled by the words of the crone  
Dance like marionettes played by a mad puppeteer  
And their claws scrabble and tear at the underside of wooden lids

The wind whispers a welcome as cloth tears and splinters fall  
And the shroud of snow, pallid and pale as a bleached bone,  
Trembles, shivers, heaves upwards  
The skin of a corpse being consumed by the worms of decay writhing beneath  
It cracks, splits, opens under the pressure  
And a hand, palsied and stiff, its dead fingers spiny with splinters  
Forces its way out to clutch at the winter night  
The first of many, many, many

The wind whispers, laughing at the shambling forms that rip their way out of the soil  
An obscene, foul parody of birth in this place of death  
It laughs because it knows the spell of the words does not last long  
That the puppet's strings will quickly break, leaving the dancers to move without music  
And that the broken spell only stops the tune, not the waltz  
Nor the dancers  
Who will then move to their own symphonies, who will then turn  
And seek she who awoke them from their silent, dark, world

The wind whispers, playing about the shoulders and heads and ears of the cast in this play  
It chants the name of the crone who summoned them, forced them to rise  
Sought to enslave them and make them her toys

And as the enchantment unravels the stumbling marionettes hear the wind  
Whispering of revenge and hatred for what she sought to do  
Until rotted, clotted brains churn with fury and thirst for revenge  
“Slay her,” the wind whispers. “Slay the crone who would rule you!”  
And mouldering feet turn and begin to shuffle through the snow towards the railroad tracks

The wind whispers “This way. Come this way,”  
As the stumbling and ghastly crew lurch through the pine trees  
Seeking a tarpaper shack and an old woman  
Their thoughts only on killing the witch who would hold them captive  
Hands reach, seeking to clutch and tear and rend, teeth gnash, hungry to rip and slay  
And through it all the wind whispers “Hurry – hurry – kill her!”  
And they will obey, never realizing that one may be ruled by tyrants invisible  
And that whispering winds can lie.

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